

Pre-Council Minutes
November 9, 2009

Council Members Present: Jon Camp, Jon Spatz, Gene Carroll, Jayne Snyder, Doug Emery

Staff Members Present: Bruce Dart, Judy Halstead, Robert Westfall

Dr. Dart introduced Ms. Halstead and Animal Control Manager Mr. Westfall. Ms. Halstead reviewed the materials that were distributed to the Council. She stated the packet contains current city ordinances regarding vicious, dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs, copies of the State statutes, and current Lincoln Municipal Code chapters. The proposed revisions/recommendations would clean up the language in the Lincoln Municipal Code so it would mirror State statutes. Current definitions are inconsistent.

Recommendations include:

- 1) Revise the Dangerous and Potentially Dangerous chapters/sections to more closely reflect the changes that have recently been made in State Statutes.
- 2) Add a law that prohibits dogs deemed dangerous in other jurisdictions from being relocated to Lincoln.
- 3) Raise license fees for unaltered animals to encourage spay/neutering. The current license fee for unaltered dogs is \$34.00. Staff are recommending increasing the fee to \$50.00. Staff are recommending not changing fees for senior citizens. Ms. Halstead noted that last year, 82% of the bites were by unaltered dogs.
- 4) Remove the language “under direct and effective owner voice control” as an acceptable way for an owner to restrain a dog in the definition of “Running At Large”. She stated that during the past year, 35 bites and 25 attacks were by dogs that were supposedly under the owner’s voice control.
- 5) Adding micro chipping to Potentially Dangerous Dogs. She noted this is currently required only for Dangerous Dogs.
- 6) Move the Bites Unlawful ordinance language from the Dangerous Dog section to the General section of Chapter 6, allowing use of the ordinance language to apply to incidents other than only ones involving dogs that are already dangerous. This change would allow Animal Control to cite the owner for animal bites inflicted by dogs that have not already been declared dangerous.
- 7) Revise the current law that revokes animal licenses after 7 convictions in a 12 month period, to a more restrictive number (possibly fewer convictions or a longer time span). Staff are recommending 4 convictions in 12 months and/or 6 convictions in 24 months.

Council members asked questions about each of the recommendations. We currently have 89 dangerous dogs and 340 potentially dangerous dogs registered in the City of Lincoln Ms. Halstead stated the proposed recommendations will also be provided to the Board of Health.

Upcoming opportunities for public input include an Information Session on November 16th, the Animal Control Advisory Committee meeting in December, Board of Health meeting in December/January and a public hearing before the City Council in January.